

Sunday Emphasis

February 11, 1968

Around Town

Church Endures Time



CHURCH HISTORY — The little white-steepled First Presbyterian Church and the pastor's home on Canty Street and Convent Avenue before both were acquired by the county to clear the site for a Chancery Court

By ARTHUR SMITH

The First Presbyterian Church of Pascagoula on the southwest intersection of South Pascagoula Street and Ingalls Avenue will be 79 years old on April 26, 1968, but its house of worship has been on that site only since October, 1955.

Previously the church and the manse were on Canty Street and Convent Avenue, south of the site of the Chancery Court building. The church sold its properties there to the county (shown in picture) on March 21, 1955, for \$20,000.

Five years later the county acquired adjoining property on the North to Watts Avenue from Mrs. Leona Pelham Alley

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missioned Architect Claude H. Lindsley of Ocean Springs to prepare plans and specifications for a Sunday School room on the south side of the church and a Fellowship Hall on the west. The estimated cost of both is \$150,000. Rev. Warren W. Beale, who recently became the church's associate pastor, is assisting in the



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building. The church was organized in 1890. The first church, completed in 1891, was destroyed by fire in 1895 and the one pictured was a replacement. The pastor's home or manse, was built in 1905.

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ORGANIZED IN 1890 Archives of the church show that on April 26, 1890 a group of 16 Presbyterians met at the Methodist Church in Scranton to organize the church. The Presbytery at New Orleans had appointed R. Q. Mallard as moderator and Rev. D. O. Byers and Dr. W. D. Bragg of the Moss Point Presbyterian Church as other members of a committee.

The initial organization was completed by election of Dr. Bragg as elder and Messrs. W. K. Meade, W. M. Denny and C. T. Irving as deacons. Messrs. Meade, Denny, Irving, John Brander and F. H. Lewis were elected trustees.

Previous to that meeting and until their own frame building was erected on Canty Street at Convent Avenue, the members held services in the Methodist Church.

The records are not clear as to dates of acquisition of the church site but it was bought from James Smith and measured about 123 feet on Canty Street and 188 in depth. The lot cost \$400, and the frame building \$2,302.31. Edmund Mitchell donated the bell.

A note in the minutes of a session on August 30, 1891 records: "This beautiful summer day will be long remembered by the members of the Scranton Presbyterian Church. After long and earnest effort in the midst of almost insufferable difficulties our church home is so far near completion as to be used, and our first services were held in it today".

Rev. D. O. Byers of Moss Point preached twice a month in the afternoons and on every fifth Sunday in the morning. A Sunday School was formed September 6, 1891 with Elder John Walsh as superintendent, C. T. Irving assistant and H. C. Herring of Moss Point Secretary. The enrollment was 30 with five teachers.

A financial report that year showed an income of \$506.50 from 19 members; \$100 went to the pastor and the balance for congregational expenses and benevolences.

In 1895 the church was destroyed by fire of suspected incendiary origin. With the small insurance payment and by incurring debts the church building pictured above was built.

On October 5, 1905, a committee, composed of Rev. J. Frank Turner, Andrew Gray and G. B. Chapman was named to build a home for the pastor. This was completed at a cost said to be \$4,000, and put the church heavily in debt. The manse is shown in the picture.